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RESOLUTION SEEKS URGENT HELP FROM CONGRESSIONAL TEAM

The end of 2020 is fast approaching, which is why the Honolulu City Council unanimously approved a resolution last week urging Hawaii's Congressional Delegation to push for extending the federal deadline to utilize the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security or CARES Act Funding.

Resolution 20-268, FD1, introduced by Council Chair Emeritus Ron Menor, also implores our federal team to provide additional funding for COVID-19 response and relief efforts.

"It's going to take several years for our devastated economy to fully recover, but the clock is ticking right now for Hawai'i because every CARES Act dollar has to be spent by December 30th or we have to give the money back to the federal government," said Chair Emeritus Menor. "That's why it's imperative that we get more time and more federal funds so our residents, who are suffering now, can be appropriately helped."

The State of Hawai'i received a total of \$10.2 billion in federal awards to address the impacts of COVID-19 including \$1.25 billion from the CARES Act. However, the State has expended or encumbered only 22.3 percent of its CARES Act funding.

The City and County of Honolulu received \$387 million in CARES Act funding and, as of October 27, 2020, allocated \$363.8 million, or 94 percent. The City also expects to receive about \$100.1 million from various federal grant programs for COVID-19 response and relief efforts. So far, the City has committed only 74 percent of its CARES Act funding and must still decide how to use its remaining \$23.2 million.

Both the State and the City clearly need additional time to appropriately spend their remaining balances, but CARES Act funding can only be used on expenses incurred prior to December 30, 2020. Any funds unused by that date must return to the federal government.

Meanwhile, too many O'ahu residents continue to struggle, many of them still waiting for economic relief from unemployment, rental or housing assistance, and food assistance. The Council hopes Resolution 20-268, FD1, will spur our Congressional Delegation to extend the federal deadline and provide more federal funding.

For more on this resolution or the Honolulu City Council, please go to the following web sites:
<http://www.honolulucitycouncil.com> or <http://www.honolulu.gov/council>

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